

I oppose media concentration!
Re: Docket No. 02-277
Dear FCC Commissioners:

I urge the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to not further weaken media ownership rules that help preserve competition and ownership diversity of American media. I am extremely alarmed at reports that the FCC appears inclined to materially relax those rules on June 2, despite 18,000 public comments overwhelmingly opposing more media consolidation.

If that happens, one company may be allowed to own the local newspaper, several TV and radio stations, and the cable TV system in the same community. There would be fewer owners of networks, stations, and newspapers nationwide. Media ownership would be concentrated among fewer companies, and the public's ability to have open, informed discussion with a wide variety of viewpoints would be further seriously compromised.

Americans understand that deregulation which reduces competition does not serve the public interest. [Hundreds of concerned Californians opposing further media consolidation attended recent symposia in San Francisco and Los Angeles with commissioners Adelstein and Kopps.] Our airwaves belong to the public, and must serve the public - not media monopolists. The purpose (and jurisdiction) of the FTC is to promote and protect public - not private - interests. Media diversity promotes the free market of ideas; monopoly destroys it. Any further monopolization of our already obscenely "clear-channelized" broadcast wasteland, would be an immense and tragic blow to what remains of our ever-eroding democracy.

The FCC needs to reinstate - not emasculate - its traditional media ownership rules. Moreover, it needs to reinstate the broadcast "fairness" doctrine to restore some modicum of informed public debate. Any FTC rule change contrary to the public interest would be ultra vires and could irreparable harm to our democracy.

Respectfully,

Ron Rattner, Attorney